



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company: Tommy Smith & the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra

Venue: Perth Theatre

Title of Event: Three Decades of Steely Dan

Type of Event: Musical (Jazz)

Date of Visit: 29th May 2009

Overall Rating: Excellent

The thematic approach to Tommy Smith's work is very effective and demonstrates a high level of professionalism. The arrangements used for this performance were exciting and interesting with a range of musical textural techniques employed. The complexity of the music varied making the concert accessible to all in attendance. Tommy Smith fronts the Orchestra very well and relates to the audience with a warm and familiar manner. The standard of musicianship of all members is of the highest order. All soloists push the boundaries thus never falling into predictability. The whole developmental approach to this Orchestra is extremely healthy for the future of all styles of music, not just jazz. Soloists were not over used with most members of the band featuring just once or twice within improvised solos, with the soloist usually dictating the length of solo. This gave momentum to the performance and maintained engagement of the audience. The leader introduced each piece in an informative and, at times, humorous manner.

The Orchestra might give thought to presentation. Whilst the leader was impeccably dressed; this was not always matched by the entire orchestra. Whilst an entirely uniformed appearance would clearly not be appropriate for this group, the leader has set a standard that should to some degree be followed. This is a minor point that in no way detracted from the extremely high standard of professional musicianship.

The selection of recordings on sale was impressive and reinforced the Orchestra's aims to record, facilitate and promote new recordings.

The Scottish Arts Council logo was not very apparent in some promotional material and a mention of the organisations funding the orchestra could have been made during the performance to redress this.

This was an enjoyable and inspiring event to attend.

Name: Justin Brook

Date: 8th June 2009

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Specialist Advisor

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated on the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to future applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its funded organisations.

Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:

Very poor- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor - not well conceived and executed

Satisfactory

Good - well conceived and executed

Very Good – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

Excellent – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally high standard

1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Exc	A highly creative performance. The arrangements were interesting and innovative resulting in musical textures that felt fresh and new. The contrast of rock guitar to that of a Jazz Orchestra worked well.
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Exc	The SNJO's vision is all about development of this musical genre. It achieves this fully by pushing the boundaries both musically and technically. It manages fulfil its aim to celebrate Big Band music
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	VG	This event would have benefitted from a programme. There is some good information on the website and the music and ideas were well communicated to the audience. A programme would have filled in gaps in information such as the arranger and how the concept of this particular musical work came about.
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Exc	The SNJO is clearly a group of exceptional performers. Tommy Smith fronts the Orchestra brilliantly and related to the audience extremely well. The audience were engaged at all times. The Orchestra's membership includes numerous very well known players that are performing throughout Scotland as well as internationally. This gives the band a high status level.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work original? How was the space used? How many dancers were there and how were they used? How long was the piece? 		N/A
Theatre	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new work second productions classics where the original has been substantially changed 		N/A

¹ Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 		N/A
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 		N/A
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 		N/A
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist’s talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants’ views and choices help inform the structure and content of the 	Exc	<p>There was no particular audience target and I feel the material used will have attracted a diverse range of people. The audience were engaged in what was an inspiring performance well presented to this audience.</p> <p>This particular piece of work should help to “reach a wider audience of listeners and engage listeners of all ages”.</p> <p>The venue was at full capacity with people of all ages attending. There were also disabled people in the audience.</p> <p>Supporting materials came in the form of on line information, posters and a range of SNJO CDs for sale.</p> <p>The SNJO also has a Youth Orchestra strand that was mentioned on more than one occasion as well as employing some of its members in this performance. This will have been a great learning experience for these young, talented musicians.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>project?</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		

2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?

Criteria	Comment
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? What were the sight lines like? How big was it? 	<p>Perth Theatre was easy to find. It presents with an excellent first impression with good facilities'. Even in what would be considered to be a poor seat the view of the performance was good.</p> <p>460 seats.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>Posters and website information available.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>I saw this event on the SNJO and Perth Theatre's website. I only saw posters when arriving at the theatre. Posters do not display the Scottish Arts Council logo, but it does appear on the website and on the CDs on sale.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Extremely easy to book over the phone. Excellent staff.</p>
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	<p>The length of the programme was very appropriate with a suitable start and finish time.</p>
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or 	<p>All areas of the theatre are easy to find with good signage.</p>

² In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

Criteria	Comment																			
signage for audio loops?																				
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 226 1252 748"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 226 821 293"></th> <th data-bbox="821 226 916 293">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="916 226 1163 293"></th> <th data-bbox="1163 226 1252 293">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 293 821 398">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="821 293 916 398">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 293 1163 398">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1163 293 1252 398">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 398 821 477">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="821 398 916 477">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 398 1163 477">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1163 398 1252 477">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 477 821 748">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="821 477 916 748">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 477 1163 748">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1163 477 1252 748">Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="571 786 1252 887">I asked front of house staff about the above and was told that it was possible to make all available as necessary.</p>					Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	Yes	Audio description of performances	Yes	Captioning	Yes	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Yes
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<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<p>The staff at this venue were efficient and friendly. Front of house give a very good first impression. The bar staff worked well under extreme pressure. I witnessed staff on two occasions assist wheelchair users in the use of the stair lift in a professional and courteous manner.</p>																			

3. Organisation's Comments (optional)

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.